

## *Section 1: River Partners Program*

This handbook establishes the River Partners program for MSO St. Louis. River Partners is to be an environmental education and outreach effort focused on river communities and commercial and recreational entities along the rivers within MSO St. Louis' area of responsibility. This effort is designed to develop and enhance awareness of river pollution issues and seek to improve compliance with environmental laws and regulations.

The Mississippi River Basin is one of the largest and most complex river systems in the world, draining over 40 percent of the continental United States. It is the third largest drainage system in the world and the fifth largest river when comparing the volume of water that it discharges into the Gulf of Mexico. Unfortunately, this river system is also a major conduit to transport wastes and other pollution generated by the millions of people living along its banks.

Pollution problems within the Mississippi River Basin are challenging and the solutions are complex. To meet this challenge, a coordinated effort in pollution prevention and mitigation through the successful implementation of a River Partners education and outreach program is the goal. From a coastal perspective, it's equally important to enhance the awareness of the interconnectivity between the Mississippi River Basin and the Gulf of Mexico. In this respect, the Coast Guard has an important role in ensuring the health of our navigable waterways, river systems, and coastal zone environments.



As an education and outreach program, the Coast Guard's Sea Partners Campaign is an effort to enhance environmental awareness within the general marine community—focusing primarily upon coastal and ocean communities and reaching those most familiar with coastal beaches and marine life. But river communities generally have a different paradigm and may not react similarly to the same educational material and outreach effort as that provided by Sea Partners; thus, a River Partners focus.



## The River Partners Message

Each River Partner team member is entrusted with communicating the River Partners message to include:

1. How the effects of oil, hazardous chemicals, waste and debris, agricultural runoff in watersheds, wetlands, lakes, and rivers contribute to the degradation of healthy river ecosystems.
2. How each of the above pollution problems influences the health of downstream estuaries and coastal environments in the Gulf of Mexico.
3. How marinas within the Mississippi River basin can implement a state's Clean Marina Program (*if available and active*) and be officially recognized and able to fly the Clean Marina flag.
4. How environmental laws and regulations applicable to the inland rivers and lakes apply to various users and those along its banks.
5. How groups and individuals can take action toward environmental stewardship, such as talking with students and other interested groups on recycling, beach/bank cleanup opportunities, reduction in urban storm drain runoff and storm drain stenciling, and other environmental outreach topics and projects.

## Target Audience

It's imperative that the River Partners message be delivered to the appropriate audience to ensure maximum affect.

- **Schools.** Provide River Partners education to elementary through high school students throughout the MSO St. Louis zone on environmental stewardship, recycling, and other environmental issues that will have future and positive influence on the health and well being of the river system.
- **Marinas.** Educate marina operators and tenants on the benefits of becoming a participant in the State's Clean Marina program.
- **Municipalities.** Examine the possibility of holding educative workshops on ways and means of reducing outfall discharge in efforts to reduce pollution being discharged into the rivers.
- **Boat Shows**

- **Boating/Yacht clubs**
- **Marine Trade Associations**
- **Marine Owners/Operators.** Educate marine owners and operators on their responsibility toward environmental compliance and pollution reduction.
- **Educational Institutions (Colleges and Universities)**
- **Hunting & Fishing Clubs**
- **Girl & Boy Scout organizations**
- **Church Groups**
- **Neighborhood Communities/meetings**
- **Garden Clubs**
- **Kiwanis**
- **Business** (those that can benefit from initiating recycling programs)
- Other appropriate audiences.

## Critical Success Factors

River Partners will be successful when:

1. There is a measurable increase in community and river industry awareness of river pollution issues.
2. There is a measurable increase in pollution reporting of all incidents or occurrences in the rivers environment and adjoining waters.
3. Through an effective River Partners program, there is an increase in compliance with river related environmental protection laws and regulations.
4. There's an increase in motivated public action to protect, respond, or mitigate pollution in the rivers environment.

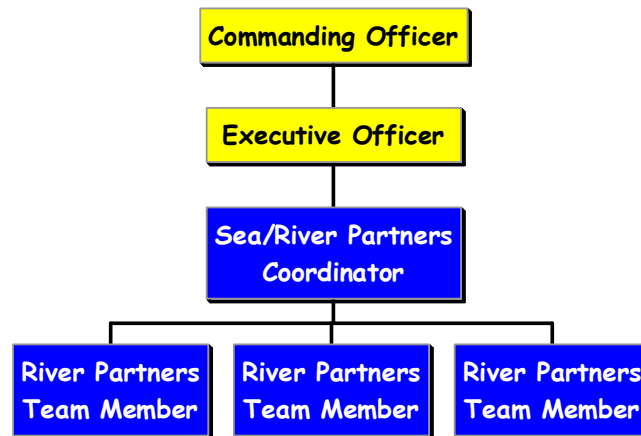


*Results of a Missouri River Beach Cleanup Project*



## **MSO St. Louis' River Partners Organization**

The River Partners program is managed and coordinated by USCG Marine Safety Office St. Louis. The basic organization is as follows:



The Sea/River Partners Coordinator is a trained Sea Partners member and is designated by the Command as the official Sea/River Partners representative.

There are also trained River Partners Team members, each of who are outreach specialists who have volunteered their time and services to provide awareness training to a variety of audiences and or who will act as subordinate coordinators in regions throughout MSO St. Louis' area of responsibility.

There can be many River Partners Team members made up of Active, Reserve, and Auxiliary personnel. These team members are able to provide environmental awareness training as described in this handbook

The goal is for Team Members to provide environmental awareness in Marine environmental protection laws and regulations and to discuss issues of importance concerning marine environmental protection and how it relates to the health and well being of our national waterways.

This includes developing local outreach strategies, developing and establishing networks and working relationships with other environmental organizations, preparation of River Partners presentations, tailoring presentations to various audiences, and general public affairs activities.

## **U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Support**

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary was established by Congress in 1939 to assist the Coast Guard in promoting boating safety. It boasts nearly 33,000 members from all walks of life who receive special training so that they may be a functional part of Team Coast Guard.

Auxiliarists assist the Coast Guard in non-law enforcement programs such as public education, vessel safety checks, safety patrols, search and rescue, marine environmental protection and Coast Guard Academy introduction programs for youth. Auxiliarists volunteer more than 2 million hours annually to benefit other boaters and their families.

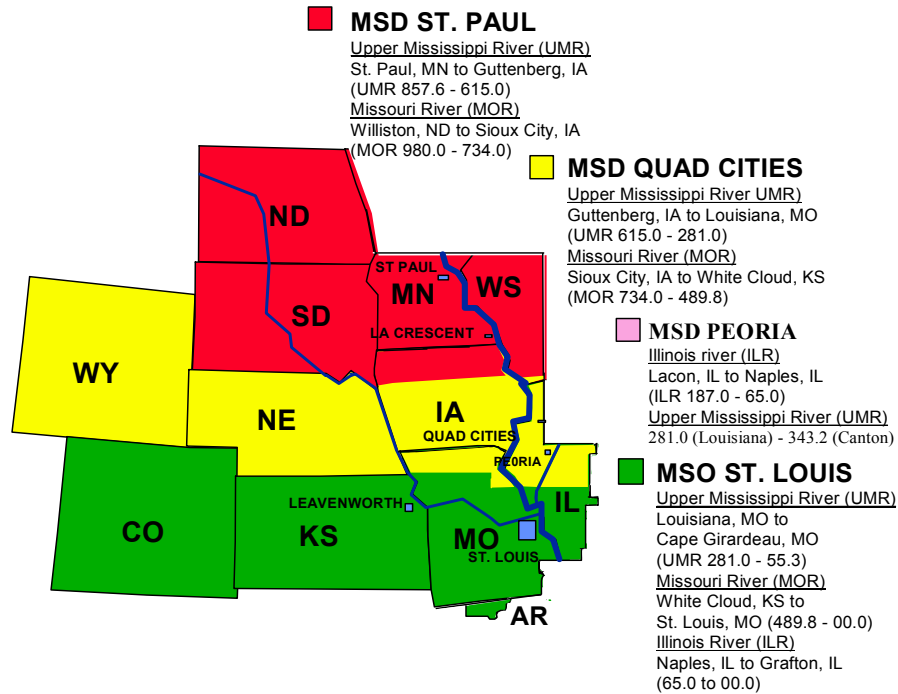
Since the Coast Guard Auxiliary has a long-established connection with the recreational boating community, it is critical to include Coast Guard Auxiliarists in the River Partners program.

Auxiliarists can support the goals of the River Partners program in various ways:



- Inclusion of environmental materials in boat show booths and at other public affairs events.
- Inclusion of environmental protection information in boating safety classes, vessel safety checks, and marine dealer visits.
- Provide River Partners presentations at schools, yacht clubs, business groups, etc.
- Assist in implementation and education of the “GOOD MATE” program using the Recreational Boating & Marina Manual published by “The Ocean Conservancy”.
- Provide information on the prevention of the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species.
- Educate marina owners and operators on the benefits of implementing a state’s Clean Marina Program (if program is active).

## Marine Safety Office St. Louis' Area of Responsibility

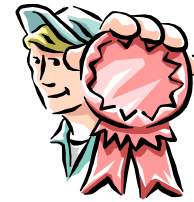


## How the River Partners Program Works

### Become a Partner

MSO St. Louis's River Partners program is an opportunity for Reserve members to support the Coast Guard's environmental protection mission with funded orders in addition to IDT/ADT through the Reserve ADSW-AC program (Active Duty for Special Work-Active Component). Supporting River Partners is not intended to compete with your regular, command endorsed ADT/IDT schedule. The River Partners program desires self-motivated people who are innovative, creative, and diligent in meeting the program goals.

To become a partner, you must contact the unit River Partners Coordinator to arrange for training material sent to your address. The River Partners Coordinator will assist you in understanding the program and will work with the command to facilitate your professional development to the greatest extent possible. It's important to see this program as meeting two goals: one of personal and professional development and one of meeting the Coast Guard's Marine Environmental Protection outreach goals.



As a volunteer, you may discontinue your active participation at any time. However, it is hopeful that over time you become more and more active, yet with busy personal or college schedules it is understandable when schedules conflict. Therefore, it is critical that you do not over commit. Nonetheless, please keep in mind that your willingness to volunteer and your level of commitment is the key to a successful River Partners program.

### **Training**

It is highly desirable for MSO St. Louis to have a number of trained outreach specialists who are capable of making presentations to a variety of audiences. These team members should receive on-the-job or formal training in:

- Marine pollution problems and solutions
- Marine environmental protection laws and regulations
- The Coast Guard's role in marine environmental protection
- Outreach strategy
- Preparation of presentations
- Tailoring presentations to various audiences
- Use of audio-visual and printed materials
- Public affairs
- Coast Guard recruiting

When possible, MSO St. Louis will hold River Partners presentation training for reservists (and others) wishing to volunteer for this program. There are preformatted (canned) presentations in the back of this handbook for you to use and are available on compact disc as well. Over time, and as you become more comfortable with your presentation skills, you may modify these presentations to meet your needs and better address local environmental issues.





## **Search Out Opportunity**

One of the first things that a River Partners Team member must do is search out opportunities to educate and present the River Partners message. Ideally, you should consider developing goals and objectives on what you would like to accomplish each month or throughout the fiscal year (i.e. two presentations a month...six in a year, etc.). At your earliest convenience, you should contact the unit River Partners Coordinator for additional guidance and support. You should also meet with the active duty staff and the MSO Executive Officer to assist you in this endeavor.

Once you have an idea as to what you would like to accomplish, next seek an appropriate audience. Combining the two (goals and audience) will give you an estimate of what you can actually achieve over a year's time.

To best run an outreach program such as this, you should seriously consider doing an assessment of persistent pollution problems in your local area and analyze where environmental education could be effective in abating those problems. The Internet and the local library are great places to start. Additional sources include local and state environmental offices, colleges and universities, and federal government. A few well-asked questions could mine all sorts of potential presentation opportunities. It's really up to you and your ability to seek them out.



Once you have a positive lead on a potential presentation, contact the unit River Partners Coordinator and verify available funds. The Coordinator will contact the Director, Sea Partners Campaign to verify commitment of funds and will get back to you as soon as possible. The purpose for this is so that you won't commit to a presentation only to be told that your travel expenses and pay can't be funded. This is particularly important at the beginning of each fiscal year while waiting for Congress to authorize the federal budget. This is also important toward the end of the fiscal year when money is in short supply. Upon approval to move ahead, arrange for the presentation and prepare to succeed.

The following paragraph describes how the unit can be authorized and funded for a certain number of presentations throughout the year so that you, the





team member, can easily set up a presentation and be authorized the funding for your pay and travel.

### **Funding For Reserve Team Members**

At the beginning of each fiscal year, the unit River Partners Coordinator will develop an estimate of ADSW-AC requirements needed to support River Partners and submit this estimate to the Director, Sea Partners Campaign at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC. Please keep in mind that this is just an estimate and there may be more or less money than promised. Therefore, it is critical for team members to be in regular contact with the unit River Partners Coordinator. Please don't ever commit or spend your own money since reimbursement is extremely difficult and generally not authorized.

The following is applicable when **not** on quarterly orders:

### **Team Member**

1. Upon committing to a presentation, notify the unit River Partners Coordinator with the Who, What, When, Where, and the number of people in audience.

**Note:** If you have arranged for more than one presentation in the same location or general vicinity, we would prefer that you try to give those presentations on the same day if, for example, they are one hour in length and you have the time to travel and prepare between the two. When calculating whether this is possible, include preparation and driving time in your travel claim.

We also prefer (but not require) a minimum of at least 10 people in an audience. This standard is based on the honor system, so please make every attempt to give your presentation to as many people as possible.

2. Request ADSW-AC orders and provide all pertinent information either via email or phone to the unit River Partners Coordinator.



### **Unit River Partners Coordinator will:**

1. Contact the Director, Sea Partners Campaign at Headquarters, Washington, DC to obtain a Travel Order Number (TONO) as necessary.
2. Coordinator will forward TONO information to team member and the unit Yeoman to initiate travel orders/ROARS. This can be accomplished by email if you provide sufficient information needed to the unit yeoman. The unit Coordinator and/or team member should always send an email copy to the XO to ensure that members receive their orders in a timely fashion.

### **Unit Yeoman shall:**

1. Promptly complete the travel orders/ROARS process and ensure that the PERSRU process is complete.
2. Contact the team member to determine how orders are to be mailed or held at unit.

### **Team Member**

1. Ensure orders are completed or in process prior to conducting any training if possible. There will be times when this may not always be possible, but it is incumbent upon you to ensure that the paper trail is in order so that problems with your travel claim and pay are minimized.
2. Make the appropriate travel arrangements. You must use the Coast Guard's travel agent in order to get government rates. Please ensure that you are traveling within government standards. You should make government travel arrangements via Carlson Wagonlit at 1-800-999-7639.
3. Understand your travel benefits as a government employee. If you exceed government rates you may not be completely reimbursed.
  - Your travel benefits are:
    - Cost of transportation at government rates
      1. Airlines
      2. POV



3. Other means of travel
  - a. Rental Car
  - b. Taxis
  - Lodging at government rates
  - Per Diem
    1. Varies depending on location.
    2. For partial day you'll receive  $\frac{3}{4}$  rate.
4. Conduct the presentation/training. When all travel is completed, report to the unit Yeoman that you have completed the ADSW-AC to get this information entered into ROARS. If entered promptly, you should be paid on the next pay cycle. It is your responsibility to ensure that this process is complete. Never assume that the process has been completed until you "see the money". ☺
5. Complete the travel claim. Normally, you are required to complete a travel claim within 3 working days post travel, although this can be difficult for a reservist who is not closely located to a Coast Guard unit or if there are work conflicts. Provide receipts for all expenses over \$75 with the travel claim and route the completed travel claim through the appropriate chain of command. Ensure you keep track of your mileage to report on your travel claim.
  - ***Note:** You may complete the travel claim in UTS. If you are not familiar with this process, see your active duty mentor or your Reserve counterpart and receive UTS training.*
  - ***Note:** If you do not have access to UTS, you may complete the standard Travel Claim form DD-1351-2 and mail it to the Unit Yeoman*
6. Provide feedback with respect to the presentation/training to the unit River Partners Coordinator as soon thereafter for the Quarterly Report by providing:
  - What went well, where to make improvements, etc?
  - What logistics and set-up issues went well or plagued you.
  - Report what supplies were used and need replacing.
  - Report hours worked.
  - Report number in/of audience reached.



## Quarterly Travel Orders

It's possible that Quarterly Orders can be issued to team members. Quarterly orders are an effective way of managing the Travel Order and presentation authorization process.

For example, if you estimate that you can provide approximately 4 to 5 presentations during a quarter (*e.g. January through March*) then quarterly orders would be your most desirable option. The Sea/River Partners Coordinator will obtain a TONO for you and the unit will issue the orders. You can then arrange for those 4 or 5 presentations without having to request additional orders.

Once you complete a presentation, notify the Coordinator and the unit yeoman and submit your ADSW-AC reporting and departure information for ROARs. This will ensure you get paid for time worked. Do this for each time you conduct a presentation.

Submit a travel claim for each presentation/training conducted. For the first travel claim you must submit your **original** orders. For all follow-on travel claims you must submit a **copy** of your original orders. Thus, you need to ensure that you maintain a photocopy of your orders at all times until the quarter is over.

If you desire, though not recommended, you can complete a travel claim for all completed travel at the end of the quarter. However, be mindful that this could create problems in paying your government charge card if you need regular reimbursement.

Reporting all your activity is important for getting paid properly as well as facilitating the unit reporting requirements. Please do so promptly. If you desire quarterly orders, please contact the Sea/River Partners Coordinator.

**Note:** Any portion of the days authorized on the quarterly orders that are not used by the end of the quarter, must be reported to the River Partners Coordinator.

The River Partners Coordinator will report these days to the Director, Sea Partners Campaign, who will then reallocate the funding elsewhere within the program.



## **Funding For USCG Auxiliary**

In general, the Coast Guard Auxiliary will be funded as per their traditional funding standards in their “P3” and “P4” accounts, and should work closely with the Coast Guard Director of Auxiliary located in St. Louis.

If there is an opportunity for Sea/River Partners that is of considerable distance requiring additional funding, or a request has been made for your participation by Coast Guard Marine Safety Office St. Louis and the Sea/River Partners Coordinator, it’s possible that additional funding for travel can be arranged.

The MSO and the Director of Auxiliary will negotiate the level of funding and then the Auxiliarist will be notified as to the extent of funding available.

## **Training Materials**

Section 6 of this manual contains an order form where training materials can be ordered from the Auxiliary Supplies Distribution Center.

In the event that the distribution center does not have a particular item that you need, please contact the Sea/River Partners Coordinator for assistance.